



Dear Chair Sosa, Vice-Chair Chaichi, Vice-Chair Osborne and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anahi Segovia Rodriguez, and I serve as the Energy Justice Coordinator at Verde, a nonprofit based in Portland dedicated to building environmental wealth in low-income communities and communities of color. I'm here today to express Verde's strong support for HB 3792, which would expand funding for the Oregon Energy Assistance Program (OEAP).

This past February, Verde hosted a utility workshop for low-income families, where we heard firsthand the deep financial strain many are under. Some households shared that they were facing utility debts as high as \$2,000. One story that stayed with me was of a family whose primary income earner could no longer keep up with rising electricity bills—all while needing to keep a loved one connected to a life-sustaining ventilator 24/7.

Sadly, this isn't an isolated case. These stories reflect a much broader crisis in our state—one where families are being forced to choose between keeping the lights on or meeting other basic needs.

The growing number of utility disconnections makes the urgency of this issue painfully clear. In 2024 alone, nearly 58,000 households served by PGE and Pacific Power were disconnected—the highest number since reporting began in 2018¹. It's evident that current assistance programs are falling short of meeting the scale of need.

OEAP is a program funded by Oregonians, for Oregonians. Expanding this funding is a critical step toward making sure more households receive the support they need to stay safe and warm. Even if this expansion helps just a portion of the families facing disconnection, it would be a meaningful investment in the health, stability, and dignity of our communities.

I urge you to support HB 3792 and take meaningful action to prevent further disconnections among Oregon's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anahi Segovia Rodriguez
Energy Justice Coordinator
Verde

¹ Citizens' Utility Board of Oregon. "Support Expanding Energy Assistance with HB 3792." *Oregon CUB*, 6 Mar. 2024, <https://oregoncub.org/news/blog/support-expanding-energy-assistance-with-hb-3792/3108/>